

DEC 27 1962

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Cuba Expected To Free More Kin of Invaders

Refugees Greeted Emotionally in Miami Auditorium

MIAMI, Fla., Dec. 27 (AP).—The freighter African Pilot brought 921 relatives of the Bay of Pigs captives to Florida today and to an emotional reunion in the vast Dinner Key Auditorium.

About 600 of the prisoners, who were released last Sunday and Monday, were waiting at the auditorium when their relatives arrived by bus from Port Everglades, where their ship docked 25 miles northeast of here.

Barricades had been thrown up inside so that Red Cross authorities could stop and take the names of the relatives as they arrived one busload after another.

But it didn't work. Some prisoners leaped over them to embrace mothers, wives and children. A few soldiers collapsed when they saw their loved ones.

The first woman to enter the hall, Mrs. Nerelda Rodriguez Estrada, 23, became incoherent when she was unable to locate her husband at once.

Embrace Soon

Mr. and Mrs. Jose Delgado tearfully embraced their son Roman, 28, when they saw him for the first time in eight months.

"It is a miracle that we are here," cried Mrs. Delgado, 55. "Anything outside of Cuba looks like heaven," her husband agreed.

Asked what was the most serious of shortages of living essentials in Cuba, Mr. Delgado replied: "The most grievous is the shortage of shame."

As the relatives arrived, hopes were high that Premier Fidel Castro would allow at least another 1,000 relatives to escape from Communist-ruled Cuba, joining the massive exodus that has brought 200,000 persons fleeing to freedom in the United States.

The possibility that President Kennedy might come to Miami to greet the 1,113 freed prisoners was raised today, but press secretary, Pierre Salinger, declined to comment on it.

Manuel Artime, civilian head of the invasion forces captured after the 1961 Bay of Pigs fiasco; Jose Perez San Roman, military commander of the assault, and three other Cubans were given a 5 p.m. appointment with Mr. Kennedy at Palm Beach.

Also aboard the African Pilot, in addition to the prisoners' relatives, was Guillermo Ara Alonso, former Havana attorney who was freed without explanation from a Cuban prison.

Restrained Welcome

At noon, the first busload of relatives reached the auditorium to receive a welcome which was warm but restrained, in vivid contrast to the wild reception that greeted the prisoners and the later arrivals among the relatives.

A few of the newcomers jumped over wooden barricades to greet their kinfolk, but most walked sedately up to those waiting to embrace them. Only about 300 persons were in the auditorium.

These probably were the best-dressed refugees in history. Many of them represented the once-wealthy Spanish families of Cuba.

One of those at dockside to meet the African Pilot was Mrs. Berta Barreto de los Heros of the Cuban Families Committee.

Mrs. Barreto had returned to Miami on the last plane in the prisoner airlift Monday. She said Premier Castro told her at the airport he would allow another 1,000 relatives of the prisoners to leave Cuba and that the committee could select them.

Donovan in Charge

"We hope to send another ship in two or three weeks," she said.

James B. Donovan, New York attorney who negotiated the release of the prisoners in exchange for a \$53 million food and drug ransom, will be in charge of arranging for another ship.

The African Pilot was strangely quiet and seemed almost deserted as she steamed into Port Everglades 25 miles northeast of here and docked at 9:01 a.m. Only a few crew members lined the rails. One waved a handkerchief.

All of the refugees were asked to remain below to prevent dangerous crowding of the decks.

Without prompting from Red Cross officials, they pitched in to clean up the five shelter areas below the main deck during the voyage.

"There will be many more of us to come," said one refugee woman who bossed the cleanup work in her compartment. "We want to leave things okay for them."

Then began the tedious job of checking the refugees through immigration and public health, which would delay them at the dock for 2 or 3 hours. This accomplished, they were to be taken in to the auditorium.

Nine children were isolated with probable cases of measles during the overnight voyage but medical authorities saw no reason to quarantine the ship.

One little Cuban boy roamed the ship, looking up at every American he met and calling out cheerily, "Hello, Kennedy."

Food was sent aboard so that some of the refugees could eat breakfast while others were being processed.

About 35 minutes after the ship docked, the first refugee—a child—was carried down the ship's ladder.

Two women and 10 children were taken to Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

Capt. R. F. Barber of the Coast Guard said the passengers would be taken off the ship at the rate of 300 an hour.

Ambulances on Pier

Several persons on stretchers were lowered over the side and placed in waiting ambulances.

About this time several refugees appeared on deck. A small girl appeared in a red dress, drinking milk, and watched the activity.

The ill, aged and pregnant were assisted gently down the gangplank. One Negro crewman carried a small boy and was rewarded with a smile for his help. The crewman flashed back a big grin.

At 10:15 a.m., the refugees began leaving the ship in a steady stream. Most were neatly, even expensively dressed, and looked like passengers coming off a cruise liner. Teen-age girls were in smart frocks and high heels.

Careful of Makeup

The women obviously had spent much time over makeup and hairdos. They held on to their skirts, which swirled in the breeze as they walked down the gangplank.

From the ship, they walked to a covered pier to receive smallpox vaccinations and fill out immigration cards.

Devoting her last voyage to this errand of mercy, the 20-year-old African Pilot entered the port at 8:50 a.m. The rugged old workhorse of the sea, which had carried ransom sup-

plies to Castro Cuba for the invasion prisoners, now goes into mothballs.

Seasickness, nervousness and the mild outbreak of measles aboard the ship failed to dampen the enthusiasm of the refugees who gave up everything they owned to escape communism and join loved ones in the United States.

Only about 200 observers saw the freighter come in. The port was closed to all but newsmen and authorized officials. A big sign said "welcome" in English.

An American flag flew from the stern of the freighter. One tug went out to help her in to the dock.

Remained Awake

Joe McGowan, Associated Press reporter representing American news agencies on the African Pilot, said many passengers remained awake through the long night, too nervous and excited to sleep.

"I have a bed," said one elderly refugee, "but who could sleep at a time like this?"

A tingle of excitement swept through the ship when the engines started last night in Havana harbor. As the ship moved out, the refugees sang the Cuban national anthem.

Moving into international waters, the African Pilot picked up an escort of three United States Coast Guard vessels. The freighter was designed to carry only 12 passengers and her life-saving equipment was inadequate.

Moves at 18 Knots

Through mild seas, the African Pilot moved at an 18-knot clip, sped along by the north-rushing Gulf Stream. Nurses moved among the refugees giving medicine to the seasick. The sickness was blamed in many cases on overwrought nerves and upset stomachs.

There were only 500 cots set up in sheltered deck areas, but there were blankets for all, flown to Havana from the United States. Each person was given a box lunch including fried

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chicken, a tomato, bread, butter and milk for the children.

"This is the first chicken my family has tasted in six months," said Miro Gonzales Cuevas, who arrived in Havana from Oriente Province yesterday to join the exodus. His son, Ramiro, 20, was among the Bay of Pigs captives who were liberated and flown to Florida Sunday and Monday.

Oldest of the refugees aboard was Angela Ceballos de Marero, 89-year-old grandmother of one of the prisoners. The youngest was a baby born 22 days ago.

Many women wore housecoats during the voyage. "I'm saving my good clothes to look nice for my husband when I arrive in Florida," one explained.

Others wore curlers and fixed their hair as the ship neared Port Everglades.

Items Confiscated

They left Cuba with little but the clothes they wore. Many items which apparently exceeded Mr. Castro's limitations were taken from the refugees on the dock at Havana.

One woman said the soldiers "took my sweater, cigarette case and extra shoes, and argued over some medicine I had in my handbag.

"I argued with them, but they asked me, 'Do you want to go or stay?'"

As a "Christmas bonus," Mr. Castro agreed to let the relatives leave Cuba, following the prisoners who spend 20 months in Mr. Castro's crowded jails after the gallant but futile effort to free their country from his rule.

Chief topic of conversation aboard the ship was the plight of a man who was turned away as the African Pilot prepared to move out.

A shabbily dressed Negro raced up the rising gangplank shrieking "Ayudame (help me)!" last night as the African Pilot made ready to cast off.

Guards on deck, strictly charged to let no more aboard the crowded ~~boat~~, regretfully barred his entry. Two Cuban soldiers on the pier scrambled up and yanked their trembling countryman back to the dock.

A man in worker's clothes threw an arm around his shoulders and led him away. Two armed soldiers followed the pair around a corner of a warehouse crammed with \$11 million in drugs and food which the African Pilot brought to

Cuba Sunday as down payment on a \$53 million commodity ransom for 1,113 men Premier Castro's troops captured in the April 17, 1961, invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

The outbound African Pilot glided past Morro Castle, ancient stone sentinel of Havana harbor, at 6:51 p.m. — about two hours later than scheduled.

In another development, President Kennedy planned a conference at Palm Beach, where he is spending the Christmas holidays, with five liberated leaders of the invasion force which was beaten back in its Cuba attack 20 months ago.

White House Secretary Pierre Salinger, who announced the meeting, said the subject of the conference would be left to the Cubans.

Plea to Captain

While the relatives were boarding the African Pilot yesterday, Nancy Rodriguez, a representative of the prisoners' Families Committee, approached Capt. Alfred Boerum with an appeal to take more than 1,000.

"I would like to," the skipper replied, "but I am deeply sorry, we absolutely must hold it at 1,000."

"Not even one more?" she asked.

"Not one more; we cannot do it. It would be unsafe."

There was no explanation.

The freighter brought to Havana Sunday an \$11 million first shipment of food and drugs asked by Mr. Castro in exchange for the prisoners.

The Red Cross said yesterday that companies have promised to donate the \$42 million worth of goods still to be sent to Cuba.

"Only shipping must be arranged," a spokesman said. "this is five or six months." "this in five or six months."

The relatives began boarding the ship at 1 p.m. yesterday in hot, sunny weather. Seventy per cent were women and children. Some of the elderly—overcome by heat and emotion—fainted on the docks. Some went aboard on stretchers or in wheelchairs. Children looked bewildered as they waited in the long boarding line and mothers daubed at tears. Men wore their best suits.